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Six Fairy Tales by the Danish Writer

# Hans Christian Andersen

Published on the Occasion of the  
150th Anniversary of his Birth

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

*Wilhelm Pedersen*



COPENHAGEN

DET BERLINGSKE BOGTRYKKERI

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Six Fairy Tales by  
Hans Christian Andersen





Hans Christian Andersen  
*Painting by C. A. Jensen 1836*

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*W. Glyn Jones*



HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN,  
THE DANISH FAIRY TALE POET

*By*

BO GRÖNBECH

WHEN Hans Christian Andersen was born in the little Danish provincial town of Odense in the year 1805, there was no one who could suspect that he was destined to become world-famous. His father, a poor shoemaker, died young, and his mother had to earn a living for herself and her son by standing in the stream at Odense and washing other people's clothes for them. He himself was almost ugly in appearance, and in addition he was a peculiar, nervous child; he would not go to school, and his greatest delight was to read books, write plays and perform and sing them in his own marionette theatre. But despite his weak health and poor surroundings he was convinced he would become famous, and an old woman predicted that his native town should one day be illuminated in his honour. When he was 14 years old he decided to leave home in order to seek his fortune. He went straight to Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark and the largest city in the country, and there his struggle for a livelihood and the future began.

He had to try to come into contact with artists and other influential people. His first visit was to the leading ballerina of the Royal Theatre. He began by telling her of himself and his love for the dramatic art, and before she knew where she was he had made preparations to perform a scene from a musical play for her; he took off his fine boots — for he could dance

better without them, he explained — and put them carefully into a corner of the room, and then he used his stiff hat as a tambourine; and so the 14 year-old boy recited, sang and danced before the distinguished spectator who, of course, thought he was mad. When he had finished he asked her what she thought of his performance, but when he realised that she was more frightened than impressed by his talents he crept away, apologising profusely.

But he did not lose heart. He went to visit other artists, and he did so with such innocent and open importunity and such enthusiasm for art — and for his own expectations — that they just could not refuse him their support. They managed to arrange for some lessons for him (and he was badly in need of some) and they procured a few small jobs for him in the Royal Theatre, but his life was without any ordered plan until one of the managers of the Theatre, a very able man in high office and a shrewd judge of others, persuaded the King of Denmark to award him a sum of money annually so that he could go to school and learn something properly. But those were difficult years for him. The headmaster of the little provincial school to which he was sent was a clever and gifted man, but he was irritable and impatient in his teaching; once when a herd of cattle went past the windows of the school he told the whole class to get up so as to be able to see their brothers better. On another occasion he told his 18-19 year-old pupil, who was still in many ways childish and naive, that he was so tall that he could be cut in two and two puppies made out of him. The headmaster's coarse and unkind manner played on Andersen's nerves, and he was happy when he was able to leave school after the final examination at the age of 23.

During these years he had decided he would become a poet — and he had not forgotten his childhood dream of world fame. However, it was by no means easy to be an author in the Copen-

hagen of that day. A writer's income was small, and in order to hold his own Hans Christian Andersen was forced to write in the accepted styles, not all of which were suited to his talents. He was never good as a dramatist. He was more fortunate with the novels he wrote, the first of which was published in 1835 after a journey to Italy.

These books were, however, not the ones that were destined to bring him the world fame which he so earnestly desired. That came in a way which was completely unexpected to him. In 1835, apart from his novel about Italy, he published a little volume of fairy tales told for children. They were stories re-told from those he had heard in the poor home of his childhood. He did not consider them as being more than entertainment without any special literary value, but he had to live, and when the first fairy tales went well he continued to make up his own stories in the same style. He did not realise immediately that that was where his future lay. But wise observers soon saw that these stories were much more original and had a message for far more people than anything else he was writing. And it was not long before they were translated, first into German, and then into other European languages, and within a few years he discovered to his great surprise that the fairy tales had made him into a writer with a European reputation.

And now they followed each other in rapid succession. Within eight or ten years they were so widely known that when he was out on his travels — he loved to travel and meet fresh people — it sometimes happened that people who were quite unknown to him came up to him and thanked him for them. On one occasion in a German town a stranger went over to Hans Christian Andersen and said he was delighted to hear that he was a Dane, and thus a countryman of the wonderful fairy tale writer. How great was the German's joy and surprise on hearing

that it was the famous poet himself to whom he was speaking. Wherever he went, in Germany, Austria, France, England, Scandinavia, he met gratitude; children gave him presents, and distinguished people invited him to their homes. A journey he made through Central Europe in 1846 seemed like a sheer triumphal procession, and the poor, strange lad from the little Danish provincial town himself experienced the wonderful fairy tale of seeing artists and politicians, counts and dukes, princes and kings vying with each other in the way in which they received and honoured him — all of which showed clearly that he had won not only a Danish but also a European public for his fairy tales.

But Hans Christian Andersen was no longer a naive lad from the provinces. His intelligence together with a fine understanding of his fellow-men soon made him into a man of the world who could mix with the same ease with aristocrats and ordinary folk, distinguished and correct, and yet always cordial. However, that was not all. Behind this façade lay hidden a restless, impetuous disposition. He was born with a nervous sensitivity which made him feel everything with much greater intensity than others, and this resulted in his reactions and changes of mood being far more violent than in normal people; indeed, his contemporaries were often of the opinion that there was no reasonable relationship between his exuberant joy or black despair and the event which had caused these moods. He wept in jubilation, for instance, when he received a letter from his friends at home while he was out on his travels, and he was beside himself with despair when he felt people were being unkind, when he failed in something he was doing, or if anything, whether great or small, upset him. A little episode told by one of his friends shows how deeply he was affected by the happenings of a moment. When he had written "The Story of a Mother"

he was filled with delight at his new fairy tale and hurried away to some good friends to read it out aloud for them, without thinking of the fact that only a few years before they had lost a child. When he discovered how frightfully thoughtless he had been he completely forgot his fairy tale, threw himself at the feet of the sorrowful mother and wept together with her, filled now with nothing but her grief.

This sensitivity caused him much suffering which he only overcame with the help of the self-irony with which he was able to regard his own adversity. But it was also this that was responsible for his richest experiences and also for some of the best things that he wrote. It led him to experience much more than other people. He noticed all sorts of things which others did not see; he saw and understood the most insignificant things in a trice; and he could perceive the comical or pathetic sides in a tiny event. Once when he was telling a few of his experiences at the Copenhagen home of a high-ranking naval officer, the fierce old salt exclaimed in comic despair, "It isn't true! It isn't true! That sort of thing never happens to the rest of us!" — He once wrote to a fellow poet that every plank and every flower that he saw as he walked along seemed to call him as though it wanted to tell him something.

For Hans Christian Andersen the poet this eminent ability to see and experience was naturally of the greatest importance. Everything he met on his path fired his imagination, and he could find inspiration wherever he turned. But to this we must add that he had seen more of life and the world than most people.

Even as a young man he had travelled, and his remarkable career brought him into contact with all sorts of people. In his childhood and youth he had learned to understand the common folk — his feeling for the little man and those who

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had been forgotten is probably the result of this — and in Copenhagen it was not long before he was moving in middle-class society, the weaknesses of which his humble birth enabled him to see clearly; after this he was the guest of the aristocracy both in Denmark and abroad. And in his works he has made use of this wealth of experience and knowledge of nature and human life.

He tells of it all in his fairy tales. Some of them deal directly with people — they are short stories (often in the form of popular fairy tales) or small moving pictures of everyday life (as for instance "The Little Match-Seller"). In others the main roles are played by trees, flowers, animals, or things, while human beings are put into the background or even disappear completely. But these things, too, are endowed with human life. They speak and think like human beings. Their exterior being and their ideas are certainly dependent on the circumstances in which they live. For the hens and ducks in "The Ugly Duckling" the world is made up of the duck-yard, and they think as though nothing else exists beyond it — the parson's garden is considered as the end of the world — and the fir tree knows no more of life than what it can see from the place in which it stands, and it makes its deductions from these experiences. But the way in which these characters think and argue is human, and so in these fairy tales Andersen at one and the same time tells of animals, flowers, etc., and gives us a picture of human types he has met in his life. For instance, the fir tree is typical of those people who are ambitious and ever discontented, and the hen in the old woman's house into which the ugly duckling strays is a personification of the middle classes with all their limitations.

Finally there are fairy tales which cannot be called short stories or stories about animals, but which by means of some

symbol express profound human sentiments. "The Story of a Mother" is one of them.

This type of fairy tale is something quite original. Hans Christian Andersen had begun by telling popular fairy tales for children; but it had never been his wish merely to be a children's writer, and when he continued to write fairy tales and develop and vary this form of writing it was because he discovered that by means of them he could give expression to his own experience of life — which was actually only for grown-ups.

It was first and foremost an experience of how many different sorts of people there are. He knew that there are great people and small people, rich and poor, happy and unhappy, contented and discontented, — that each of them must live in his own way with his own habits and have his own judgement of life and the world, all as a result of his birth and his surroundings, and without our being able to say that one man is right and the other wrong. It is quite natural that the Chinese fishermen and the little kitchen maid who lives out in the woods by the deep lakes must think and feel differently from the courtiers for whom court etiquette and rank are the most important phenomena in life, and that the little match-seller whose old grandmother has been the only person she has had to cling to in life, but is now dead, has a completely different range of conceptions from the princess who cannot tolerate having one pea under all her many eiderdowns.

This amazing awareness that every living being is privileged to live in his own way does not, however, mean that the poet was without sympathies and antipathies. But he actually only felt dislike for those who will not recognise how many different things of value there are in life: the Philistines, those narrow-minded individuals who neither know nor are interested in anything but their own spheres and complacently condemn

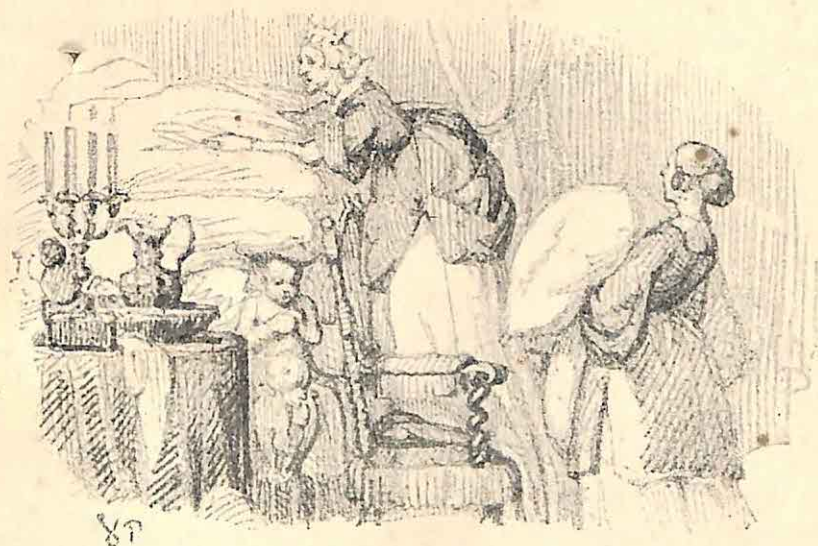
everything that is different. The fairy tale writer had no mercy for this type, and many are the portraits of Philistines which his fairy tales contain. There are several of them in "The Nightingale" and "The Ugly Duckling".

But apart from these ideas about human beings the fairy tales also contain a more general philosophy. Hans Christian Andersen's changing fate had allowed him to see all the ups and downs in life. "The Ugly Duckling" tells how everything is guided to a happy conclusion, however dark it may appear on the way, and many of the other fairy tales have the same message. But the poet was also aware that this is not the whole truth about life, and that the world contains both sorrow and injustice. In "The Story of a Mother" he has given us a moving picture of how remorseless life can be: the mother's kindness towards the old man is rewarded by his robbing her of her child, — the Night and the Bramble bush demand the wildest things of the poor mother who has deserved better. After reading this story we have difficulty in thinking of Andersen as an optimist who is always full of confidence. Nor was he one, for he knew all the conditions life can offer us far too well. But the end even of this story is marked by reconciliation and confidence, and they were Andersen's own. For despite sorrows and disappointments he retained to the very end an unswerving faith in life's fundamental goodness and in its wealth and beauty; and he believed that he who is ready to accept the great and small gifts of life will never be disappointed, indeed that even sorrow can be changed into a blessing if only we accept it in the right way.

This confidence is the most profound message contained in the fairy tales, for it was Hans Christian Andersen's own heartfelt experience. He was fortunate enough to be able to go on writing until he was advanced in years, and he harvested all the honours he had dreamed of winning in his immature youth;

## THE DANISH FAIRY TALE POET

indeed, he even lived to be made a citizen of honour in his own native town and to see it illuminated for his sake, just as the old woman had prophesied for him when he was a boy. When, at 70 years of age, he closed his eyes at the home of some faithful friends in Copenhagen he could do so with the knowledge that he had reached the goal of his life and that he had presented people with something which could give them delight and on which they could base their existence. Time has shown us how profound the wisdom contained in the fairy tales really is. 150 years after his birth and 80 years after his death there are still people all over the world who derive courage to live from them. Many of his readers scarcely know who the poet was. But his works live on.



## *The Princess on the Pea*

ONCE upon a time there was a Prince, who wanted to have a Princess of his own, but she must be a proper Princess. So he travelled all over the world in order to find one, but every time there was something wrong. There were plenty of Princesses, but he could never quite make out if they were real Princesses; there was always something that wasn't quite right. So he came back home and was very much upset, because he did so long for a real Princess.

One evening a terrible storm blew up. There was lightning and thunder, the rain came pouring down—it was simply dreadful! All at once there was a knock at the city gate, and the old King went out to open it.

## THE PRINCESS ON THE PEA

It was a Princess standing outside. But goodness! what a sight she was with the rain and the weather! The water was running all down her hair and her clothes, and in at the tip of her shoes and out again at the heels; and yet she declared she was a real Princess.

"Well, we shall soon see about that!" thought the old Queen. She didn't say anything, but she went into the bedroom, took off all the bedclothes and placed a pea on the bottom of the bed; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on top of the pea, and then again twenty of the softest feather-beds on top of the mattresses. That's where the Princess had to sleep for the night.

In the morning they asked her how she had slept. "Oh, dreadfully badly!" said the Princess. "I hardly had a wink of sleep all night! Goodness knows what there was in the bed! I was lying on something so hard that I'm simply black and blue all over. It's perfectly dreadful!"

So then of course they could see that she really was a Princess, because she had felt the pea right through the twenty mattresses and the twenty feather-beds. Nobody but a real Princess could have such a tender skin as that.

And so the Prince took her to wife, because now he knew that he had a proper Princess. And the pea was sent to the museum, where it is still to be seen, unless someone has taken it.

There, that's something like a story, isn't it?

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## *The Nightingale*

You know of course that in China the Emperor is a Chinese and his subjects are Chinese too. The story I'm going to tell you happened many years ago, but that's just why you had better hear it now before it's forgotten.

The Emperor's palace was the finest palace in the world, made entirely of delicate porcelain. It was all so precious and fragile that you had to be tremendously careful how you touched anything. The garden was full of the rarest flowers, and the loveliest of these had little silver bells tied to them which tinkled so that no one should go by without noticing them. Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was most carefully thought out, and it stretched so far that even the gardener had no idea where it ended. If you kept on walking, you found yourself in a glorious wood with tall trees and deep lakes. The wood went right down to the sea, which was blue and deep; big ships could sail right in under the branches of the trees. Here lived a nightingale that sang so beautifully that even the poor fisherman, who had so much else to see to, would stop and listen, when he was taking his nets in at night and suddenly heard the nightingale. "My word! that's lovely!" he said; but then he had to get on with his work and forgot about the bird. Yet when she sang again the following night and the fisherman was out there with his nets, "My word!" he repeated, "that is lovely!"

From every country in the world travellers came and marvelled at the Emperor's great city, his palace and his garden; but as



soon as they heard the nightingale, everyone said the same—"Oh, but that's the best of all!" And when they got home from their travels, they had many tales to tell, and clever people wrote books about the city and the palace and the garden, yet they never forgot the nightingale; she was given the place of honour. And the poets wrote the most lovely poems, all about the nightingale in the wood there beside the deep sea.

These books went all over the world, and so in course of time some of them reached the Emperor. There he sat in his golden chair, reading and reading; and now and then he nodded his head, for he was pleased to come across such splendid descriptions of the city and the palace and the garden. "But the nightingale is really the best of all," said the book he was reading.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "The nightingale? Why, I've never heard of her! Is there such a bird in my Empire and, what's more, in my own garden? Nobody's ever told me that—one has to read about it in a book!" And, with that, he summoned his gentleman-in-waiting, who was so grand that, whenever anyone of lower rank than himself ventured to speak to him or to ask a question, he only answered "P!"—and that means nothing at all.

"It says here that we have a most remarkable bird called a nightingale," said the Emperor. "They declare that there's nothing like her in all my Empire. Why have I never been told of this before?"

"It's the first I've ever heard of her," answered the gentleman-in-waiting. "She's never been presented at Court."

"I command her to be brought here this evening to sing to me," said the Emperor. "The whole world knows what I possess—and I know nothing!"

"It's the first I've ever heard of her," repeated the gentleman-in-waiting. "I shall look for her, and I shall find her."

Find her? But where? The gentleman-in-waiting ran upstairs and downstairs, through rooms and passages, but none of the people he met had ever heard of the nightingale. So the gentleman-in-waiting hurried once more to the Emperor and said it was obviously a story invented by those who write books. "Your Majesty mustn't believe everything you read. Most of it's just made up—what they call the black art."

"But the book I read it in," said the Emperor, "was sent me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, so it can't be untrue. I *will* hear the nightingale. She's to come and sing tonight, under my royal patronage; and if she fails to appear, then every courtier shall be punched in the stomach directly after supper."

"Tsing-pe!" said the gentleman-in-waiting and ran up and down all the stairs again, through all the rooms and passages; half the Court ran with him, for they didn't a bit like the idea of being punched in the stomach. They kept asking after this extraordinary nightingale that everybody knew about except the people at Court.

At last they came across a poor little girl in the kitchen, who said "Oh, golly—the nightingale? I know her well. My, how she can sing! Every evening I'm allowed to take home a few scraps from the table for my poor sick mother who lives down by the shore; and on my way back I often take a rest in the wood, and then I hear the nightingale singing. It brings tears to my eyes, just as if my mother were kissing me."

"Little kitchen-maid," said the gentleman-in-waiting, "you shall have a regular situation in the kitchen and be allowed to watch the Emperor eating his dinner, if only you'll take us to the nightingale. You see, she's to give a command performance this evening before the Emperor."

So then they all set out for the wood where the nightingale used to sing; half the Court joined in the quest. As they were

going along, a cow began to moo. "Ah, there she is!" said the courtiers. "What remarkable strength in such a small creature! Yes, it's certainly not the first time we've heard her."

"No, but that's a cow mooing," said the little kitchen-maid. "We've still got a long way to go."

Then some frogs started croaking in the pond. "Delightful!" said the Emperor's chaplain. "Now I can hear her: just like little church-bells."

"No, those are frogs," said the little kitchen-maid. "But I expect we shall soon hear her now." And then the nightingale began to sing.

"There she is!" said the little girl. "Listen, listen! There she is, up there"—and she pointed to a little grey bird up in the branches.

"Is it possible?" said the gentleman-in-waiting. "Why, I never pictured her like that. How ordinary she looks! I expect she's off colour through having so many distinguished visitors."

"Little nightingale," called out the small kitchen-maid quite boldly, "our gracious Emperor would like you to sing to him."

"With the greatest of pleasure," said the nightingale, and at once began to sing most deliciously.

"Just like glass bells," observed the gentleman-in-waiting. "And look at the way her little throat keeps working. I can't make out why we've never heard her before. She'll make a great hit at Court."

"Shall I sing once more to the Emperor?" asked the nightingale, for she thought the Emperor was there.

"My excellent little nightingale," replied the gentleman-in-waiting, "it is my very pleasant duty to summon you to a concert this evening at the palace, where you will enchant His Imperial Majesty with your delightful singing."

"It sounds best out in the open," said the nightingale. Still, she went along readily enough on hearing it was the Emperor's wish.

At the palace everything had been polished up, until the china walls and floors glittered in the light of thousands and thousands



of gold lamps. The loveliest flowers, hung ready for tinkling, were arranged in the corridors; and there was such a draught from the scurrying to and fro that their bells were all set ringing and you couldn't hear a word that was spoken.

In the middle of the great hall in which the Emperor sat was a golden perch for the nightingale. The entire Court was present; and the little kitchen-maid was allowed to stand behind the door, as she now ranked as a regular palace kitchen-maid. Everyone was dressed in their finest clothes, and they all looked at the little grey bird as the Emperor nodded to her to begin.

And the nightingale sang so beautifully that tears came into the Emperor's eyes and trickled right down his cheeks; and then the nightingale's singing became even lovelier—it went straight to his heart. And the Emperor was so pleased that he said the nightingale should have his gold slipper to wear round her neck; but the nightingale said no thank you, she had been rewarded enough already. "I've seen tears in the Emperor's eyes; that's my richest reward. There's a strange power in an Emperor's tears. Heaven knows, they are reward enough!" And then the nightingale let them hear her lovely voice again.

"Who ever saw such airs and graces!" said the ladies around; and they went and filled their mouths with water so as to gurgle when anyone spoke to them; yes, they thought they could be nightingales too. Even the lackeys and lady's maids expressed their approval; and that's saying a good deal, for they are the most difficult of all to satisfy. There's no doubt whatever, the nightingale made a great hit.

She was now to remain at Court and have her own cage, with leave to go out for two walks in the daytime and one at night. She was given twelve attendants, who each held on tightly to a silk ribbon fastened round her leg. There was absolutely no fun in a walk like that.

The whole city was talking of this remarkable bird, and, when two people met, one of them merely said "night" and the other "gale", and after that they sighed and quite understood each other. What's more, eleven grocers' children were named after her, but not one of them had a note in its head...

One day a large parcel arrived for the Emperor, with the word "Nightingale" written on the outside.

"I expect this is a new book about our famous bird," said the Emperor. But it wasn't a book at all; it was a little gadget lying in a box—an artificial nightingale that was supposed to look like

the live one but was covered all over with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. You only had to wind it up, and it could sing one of the songs that the real nightingale sang; and all the while its tail went up and down, glittering with silver and gold. Round its neck was a little ribbon, on which was written: "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor beside the Emperor of China's."

"How delightful!" they all said; and the one who brought the artificial bird was at once given the title of Chief Imperial Nightingale Bringer.

"Now they must both sing at once," suggested somebody. "What a duet that will be!"

So the two birds had to sing together; but it wasn't a success, because the real nightingale sang in her own way, whereas the artificial bird went by clockwork. "It can't be blamed for that", said the Master of the Emperor's Music. "It keeps perfect time and follows my own methods exactly." After that, the artificial bird had to sing by itself. It was just as popular as the real one, and of course it was also much prettier to look at, glittering there like a cluster of brooches and bracelets.

Over and over again it sang its one and only song—thirty-three times without tiring—and the listeners would have liked to hear it all once more, but the Emperor thought that now it was time for the real nightingale to do some singing ... But where ever was she? No one had noticed her fly out of the open window, away to her own green woods.

"Bless my soul, what's the meaning of this?" said the Emperor; and all the courtiers were highly indignant and said what an ungrateful creature the nightingale was. "Still, we've got the best one," they added; and then the artificial bird was obliged to sing once more. That was the thirty-fourth time they were hearing the same song; but they didn't quite know it even yet, for it was so difficult. And the Master of Music gave the bird extra-

ordinary praise; in fact, he declared that it was better than the real nightingale, not merely because of its outward appearance and all the wonderful diamonds, but also for the works inside.

"You see, ladies and gentlemen and, above all, Your Imperial Majesty, with the real nightingale there's no telling what's going to happen. But with the artificial bird everything is fixed beforehand. Such-and-such will be heard and no other. One can account for it all: one can open it up and show the human mind at work, the position of the cylinders, how they go round, and the way in which one thing follows from another!"

Everyone said that they quite agreed, and the Master of Music got permission to show the bird to the public on the following Sunday. "They must also hear it sing," said the Emperor. And hear it they did. They were as delighted as if they had drunk themselves merry on tea—and that's so like the Chinese! They all said "Oh!" and held up one finger—the finger we call "lick-pot"—and nodded their heads. But the poor fisherman who had heard the real nightingale said: "It don't sound so bad—quite like the bird—and yet there's something kind o' missing."

The real nightingale was sent into exile—banished from land and realm. The artificial bird had its place on a silk cushion close to the Emperor's bed; all the presents it had been given, gold and precious stones, lay round about, and it was promoted to be Chief Imperial Bedside Minstrel of the First Class on the Left; for the Emperor considered the side on which the heart lies to be the most distinguished, and even an Emperor has his heart on the left. The Master of Music wrote a book in twenty-five volumes about the mechanical bird; it was very long and learned, full of the most difficult Chinese words, and everyone pretended they had read it and understood it, or else of course they would have been thought stupid and got punched in the stomach.



Well, this went on for a whole year, until the Emperor, his Court and all the other Chinese knew by heart every little gurgle in the throat of the artificial songbird; but for that very reason they came to like it all the better. They could join in the singing themselves, and they did. The street-boys sang "zee-zee-zee, kloo-kloo-klook!" and the Emperor sang it, too! It really was tremendous fun.

But one evening, just as the artificial bird was in full song and the Emperor lay listening in bed, something went "snap!" inside the bird. Then there was a "whirrrrr"; the wheels all went whizzing round ... and the music stopped.

The Emperor quickly jumped out of bed and sent for the doctor, but what could he do? Then they brought along the watchmaker, and after a great deal of talk and poking about he got the bird to work after a fashion; but he said that it mustn't be used too often, as the bearings were almost worn out and it was impossible to get fresh parts that would fit in properly with the music. This was a sad disappointment. Once a year only was the artificial bird allowed to sing, and even that was something of a strain; but on these occasions the Master of Music made a little speech full of difficult words, saying that the bird was just as good as ever—and so of course it was just as good as ever.

Five years had now gone by, and presently the whole country was filled with sorrow, for really in their hearts they were all fond of their Emperor; but now he was ill and not likely to live, it was said. A new Emperor had already been chosen, and people stood out in the street and asked the gentleman-in-waiting how their Emperor was. "P!" he replied and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his magnificent great bed. The whole Court believed him to be dead, and each of them hastened to pay their respects to the new Emperor. The valets ran out to gossip about it, and the palace housemaids had a large tea-

party. Everywhere, in all the rooms and corridors, heavy cloth had been laid down in order to deaden the sound of footsteps; the whole palace was as still as still could be.

But the Emperor wasn't dead yet. Stiff and pale he lay in the magnificent bed with its long velvet curtains and heavy gold tassels; through an open window high up on the wall the moon was shining down on the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was just as if something was sitting on his chest. He opened his eyes, and then he saw it was Death that sat on his chest and had put on his gold crown and was holding the Emperor's gold sword in one hand and his splendid banner in the other. All round the bed, from the folds in the great velvet curtains, strange faces were peering, some of them hideous, others wonderfully gentle and kind. They were the Emperor's good and evil deeds, gazing down on him now that Death was sitting on his heart.

"Do you remember that?" they whispered, one after the other. "Do you remember that?" And they told him so much that the sweat stood out on his forehead.

"I never realised that," said the Emperor. "Music, music! Sound the great Chinese drum," he cried, "to save me from hearing what they say!"

But still they went on, and Death kept nodding like a Chinese at every word they whispered.

"Music, music!" shrieked the Emperor. "You wonderful little golden bird, sing, I implore you, sing! I've given you gold and precious stones, I've hung my own gold slipper round your neck—sing, I implore you, sing!"

But the bird was silent; there was no one to wind it up, and it couldn't sing without that. But Death went on staring at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and everything was so still, so terribly still.

All at once, close to the window, came a burst of most beautiful singing. It was the little live nightingale, perched in a tree outside. She had heard of her Emperor's distress and had therefore come to sing him consolation and hope; and, as she sang, the shapes grew fainter and fainter, the blood in the Emperor's weak limbs ran faster and faster, and Death himself listened and said, "Go on, little nightingale, go on!"

"Yes, if you'll give me the fine gold sword ... if you'll give me the splendid banner ... if you'll give me the Emperor's crown!"

And Death gave up each treasure for a song, and still the nightingale went on singing. She sang of the quiet churchyard where the white roses bloom, where the elder-tree smells so sweet, and where the fresh grass is watered with the tears of those who are left behind. Then Death began to long for his garden and floated like a cold white mist out of the window.

"Thank you, thank you!" said the Emperor. "You heavenly little bird, now I know who you are! I banished you from land and realm—and yet you have sung those evil visions away from my bed, you have lifted Death from my heart. How can I ever repay you?"

"You have done already," said the nightingale. "The first time I sang I brought tears to your eyes—I shall never forget that. Those are the jewels that rejoice a singer's heart ... But sleep now and get well and strong again! I will sing to you."

And the nightingale sang and the Emperor fell into a sweet sleep—such a peaceful, refreshing sleep. When he awoke, restored once more to health, the sun was shining in through the windows. None of his servants had come back yet, for they thought he was dead; but the nightingale was still singing outside.

"You must never leave me again," said the Emperor. "You shall only sing when you want to, and the artificial bird—I shall break it into a thousand pieces."

"No, don't do that," said the nightingale. "It's done what it could; don't part with it yet. I can't make my home in the palace, but let me come when I feel that I want to; then I'll sit of an



evening on this branch by the window, and my singing can make you both gay and thoughtful. I shall sing of those that are happy, and of those that suffer; I shall sing of the good and the evil that are here lurking about you. Your little songbird must fly round to distant homes—to the poor fisherman and the humble peasant—to those who are far from you and your Court. I love your heart better than your crown ... and yet there's a breath of something holy about the crown ... I shall come, I shall sing to you; yet there's one thing you must promise me."

## THE NIGHTINGALE

"Whatever you ask!" answered the Emperor, standing there in the imperial robes that he had himself put on and holding the heavy gold sword to his heart.

"One thing only I ask of you. Let no one know that you have a little bird who tells you everything; that will be best." And then the nightingale flew away.

The servants came in to look after their dead Emperor. Yes, there they stood, and the Emperor said, "Good morning!"

## *The Ugly Duckling*

SUMMER-TIME! How lovely it was out in the country, with the wheat standing yellow, the oats green, and the hay all stacked down in the grassy meadows! And there went the stork on his long red legs, chattering away in Egyptian, for he had learnt that language from his mother. The fields and meadows had large woods all around, and in the middle of the woods there were deep lakes.

Yes, it certainly was lovely out in the country. Bathed in sunshine stood an old manor-house with a deep moat round it, and growing out of the wall down by the water were huge dock-leaves; the biggest of them were so tall that little children could stand upright underneath. The place was as tangled and twisty as the densest forest, and here it was that a duck was sitting on her nest. It was time for her to hatch out her little ducklings, but it was such a long job that she was beginning to lose patience. She hardly ever had a visitor; the other ducks thought more of swimming about in the moat than of coming and sitting under a dock-leaf just for the sake of a quack with her.

At last the eggs cracked open one after the other—"peep! peep!"—and all the yolks had come to life and were sticking out their heads.

"Quack, quack!" said the mother duck, and then the little ones scuttled out as quickly as they could, prying all round under the green leaves; and she let them do this as much as they liked, because green is so good for the eyes.

"Oh, how big the world is!" said the ducklings. And they certainly had much more room now than when they were lying in the egg.

"Do you suppose this is the whole world?" said the mother. "Why, it goes a long way past the other side of the garden, right into the parson's field; but I've never been as far as that. Well, you're all out now, I hope"—and she got up from her nest—"no, not all; the largest egg is still here. How ever long will it be? I can't bother about it much more." And she went on sitting again.

"Well, how's it going?" asked an old duck who came to pay a call.

"There's just this one egg that's taking such a time," said the sitting duck. "It simply won't break. But just look at the others—the loveliest ducklings I've ever seen. They all take after their father—the wretch! Why doesn't he come and see me?"

"Let's have a look at the egg which won't crack," said the old duck. "I'll bet it's a turkey's egg. That's how I was bamboozled once. The little ones gave me no end of trouble, for they were afraid of the water—fancy that!—I just couldn't get them to go in. I quacked and clacked, but it was no good. Let's have a look at the egg... Ay, that's a turkey's egg, depend upon it! Let it be, and teach the others to swim."

"I think I'll sit just a little while yet," said the duck. "I've been sitting so long that it won't hurt to sit a little longer."

"Please yourself!" said the old duck, and away she waddled.

At last the big egg cracked. There was a "peep! peep!" from the young one as he tumbled out, looking so large and ugly. The duck glanced at him and said: "My! what a huge great duckling that is! None of the others look a bit like that. Still, it's never a turkey-chick, I'll be bound ... Well, we shall soon find out. He shall go into the water, if I have to kick him in myself!"

The next day the weather was gloriously fine, with sun shining on all the green dock-leaves. The mother duck with her whole family came down to the moat. Splash! into the water she jumped. "Quack, quack!" she said, and one after another the ducklings plumped in after her. The water closed over their heads, but they were up again in a moment and floated along so beautifully. Their legs worked of their own accord, and now the whole lot were in the water—even the ugly grey duckling joined in the swimming.

"It's no turkey, that's certain," said the duck. "Look how beautifully he uses his legs and how straight he holds himself. He's my own little one all right, and he's quite handsome, when you really come to look at him. Quack, quack! Now, come along with me and let me show you the world and introduce you all to the barnyard, but mind and keep close to me, so that nobody steps on you; and keep a sharp look-out for the cat."

Then they made their way into the duckyard. There was a fearful noise going on, for there were two families fighting for an eel's head, and after all it was the cat that got it.

"You see! That's the way of the world," said the mother duck and licked her bill, for she too had fancied the eel's head. "Now then, where are your legs?" she said. "Look slippy and make a nice bow to the old duck over there. She's the most genteel of all these; she has Spanish blood, that's why she's so plump. And do you see that crimson rag she wears on one leg? It's extremely fine; it's the highest distinction any duck can win. It's as good as saying that there is no thought of getting rid of her; man and beast are to take notice! Look alive, and don't turn your toes in! A well-bred duckling turns its toes out, like father and mother ... That's it. Now make a bow and say 'quack!'"

They all obeyed; but the other ducks round about looked at them and said out loud: "There! Now we've got to have that rab-

ble as well—as if there weren't enough of us already! Ugh! What a sight that duckling is! We can't possibly put up with him”—and one duck immediately flew at him and bit him in the neck.

“Leave him alone,” said the mother. “He's doing no one any harm.”

“Yes, but he's so gawky and peculiar,” said the one that had pecked him, “so he'll have to be squashed.”

“What pretty children you have, my dear!” said the old duck with the rag on her leg. “All of them but one, who doesn't seem right. I only wish you could make him all over again.”

“No question of that, my lady,” said the duckling's mother. “He's not pretty, but he's so good-tempered and he can swim just as well as the others—I dare say even a bit better. I fancy his looks will improve as he grows up, or maybe in time he'll grow down a little. He lay too long in the egg—that's why he isn't quite the right shape.” And then she plucked his neck for him and smoothed out his feathers. “Anyhow, he's a drake, and so it doesn't matter so much,” she added. “I feel sure he'll turn out pretty strong and be able to manage all right.”

“The other ducklings are charming,” said the old duck. “Make yourselves at home, my dears, and if you should find such a thing as an eel's head, you may bring it to me.”

And so they made themselves at home.

But the poor duckling who was the last out of the egg and looked so ugly got pecked and jostled and teased by ducks and hens alike. “The great gawk!” they all clucked. And the turkey, who was born with spurs and therefore thought himself an emperor, puffed up his feathers like a ship under full sail and went straight at him, and then he gobble-gobbled till he was quite red in the face. The poor duckling didn't know where to turn; he was terribly upset over being so ugly and the laughing-stock of the whole barnyard.

That's how it was the first day, and afterwards things grew worse and worse. The poor duckling got chivied about by all of them; even his own brothers and sisters treated him badly, and they kept saying: "If only the cat would get you, you ridiculous great guy!" And the mother herself wished he were far away. The ducks nipped him, the hens pecked him, and the maid who had to feed the poultry let fly at him with her foot.

After that, he ran away and fluttered over the hedge, and the little birds in the bushes grew frightened and flew into the air. "That's because I'm so ugly," thought the duckling and closed his eyes—and yet managed to get away. Eventually he came out to the great marsh where the wild-ducks lived and lay there all night, utterly tired and dispirited.

In the morning the wild-ducks flew up and looked at their new companion. "What ever are you?" they asked, and the duckling turned in every direction and bowed as well as he could.

"What a scarecrow you are!" said the wild-duck, "but that won't matter to us, as long as you don't marry into our family." Poor thing! He wasn't dreaming of getting married; all he wanted was to be allowed to stay quietly among the rushes and drink a little marsh-water. After he had been there for two whole days, two wild-geese came along—or rather two wild-ganders, for they were both males. It was not long since they were hatched; that's why they were so perky.

"Look here, my lad!" they began. "You are so ugly that we quite like you. Will you come in with us and migrate? Not far off, in another marsh, are some very nice young wild-geese, none of them married, who can quack beautifully. Here's a chance for you to make a hit, ugly as you are."

"Bang! bang!" suddenly echoed above them, and both the ganders fell down dead in the rushes, and the water became red with blood. "Bang! bang!" sounded once more, and flocks of

wild-geese flew up from the rushes, so that immediately fresh shots rang out. A big shoot was on. The party lay ready all round the marsh; some even sat up in the trees on the branches that stretched right out over the rushes. Clouds of blue smoke drifted in among the dark trees and hung far over the water. Splashing through the mud came the gun-dogs, bending back reeds and rushes this way and that. It was terrifying for the poor duckling, who was just turning his head round to bury it under his wing when he suddenly found close beside him a fearsome great dog with lolling tongue and grim, glittering eyes. It lowered its muzzle right down to the duckling, bared its sharp teeth and—splash! it went off again without touching him.

The duckling gave a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness, I'm so ugly that even the dog doesn't fancy the taste of me." And he lay there quite still, while the shot pattered on the reeds and crack after crack was heard from the guns.

It was late in the day before everything was quiet again, but the poor duckling didn't dare to get up yet; he waited several hours longer before he took a look round and then made off from the marsh as fast as he could go. Over field and meadow he scuttled, but there was such a wind that he found it difficult to get along.

Towards evening he came up to a poor little farm-cottage; it was so broken-down that it hardly knew which way to fall, and so it remained standing. The wind whizzed so fiercely round the duckling that he had to sit on his tail so as not to be blown over. The wind grew worse and worse. Then he noticed that the door had come off one of its hinges and hung so much on the slant that he could slip into the house through the crack. And that's just what he did.

There was an old woman living with her cat and her hen. The cat, whom she called Sonny, could arch its back and purr; it



could even give out sparks, if you stroked its fur the wrong way. The hen had such short little legs that it was called Chickabiddy Shortlegs; it was a very good layer, and the woman loved it like her own child.

Next morning they at once noticed the strange duckling, and the cat started to purr and the hen to cluck. "Why, what's up?" said the woman, looking round. But her sight wasn't very good, and she took the duckling for a fat duck that had lost its way. "My! What a find!" she said. "I shall be able to have duck's eggs—as long as it isn't a drake! We must give it a trial."

And so the duckling was taken on trial for three weeks; but there was no sign of an egg. Now, the cat was master in the house and the hen was mistress, and they always used to say "We and the world," because they fancied that they made up half the world—what's more, much the superior half of it. The duckling thought there might be two opinions about that, but the hen wouldn't hear of it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No."

"Well, then hold your tongue, will you!"

And the cat asked: "Can you arch your back or purr or give out sparks?"

"No."

"Well, then, your opinion's not wanted, when sensible people are talking."

And the duckling sat in the corner, quite out of spirits. Then suddenly he remembered the fresh air and the sunshine, and he got such a curious longing to swim in the water that—he couldn't help it—he had to tell the hen.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked. "You haven't anything to do—that's why you get these fancies. They'd soon go, if only you'd lay eggs or else purr."

"But it's so lovely to swim in the water," said the duckling; "so lovely to duck your head in it and dive down to the bottom."

"Most enjoyable, I'm sure," said the hen. "You must have gone crazy. Ask the cat about it—I've never met any one as clever as he is—ask him if he's fond of swimming or diving! I say nothing of myself. Ask our old mistress, the wisest woman in the world! Do you suppose that she's keen on swimming and diving?"

"You don't understand me," said the duckling.

"Well, if we don't understand you, I should like to know who would. Surely you'll never try and make out you are wiser than the cat and the mistress—not to mention myself. Don't be silly, child! Give thanks to your Maker for all the kindness you have met with. Haven't you come to a nice warm room, where you have company that can teach you something? But you're just a stupid, and there's no fun in having you here. You may take my word for it—if I say unpleasant things to you, it's all for your good; that's just how you can tell which are your real friends. Only see that you lay eggs and learn how to purr or give out sparks!"

"I think I'll go out into the wide world," said the duckling.

"Yes, do," said the hen.

And so the duckling went off. He swam in the water; he dived down; but none of them would have anything to do with him because of his ugliness.

Autumn now set in. The leaves in the wood turned yellow and brown, the wind seized them and whirled them about, while the sky above had a frosty look. The clouds hung heavy with hail and snow, and the raven who perched on the fence kept squawking "ow! ow!"—he felt so cold. The very thought of it gave you the shivers. Yes, the poor duckling was certainly having a bad time.

## THE UGLY DUCKLING

One evening, when there was a lovely sunset, a whole flock of large handsome birds appeared out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen such beautiful birds, all glittering white with long graceful necks. They were swans. They gave the most extraordinary cry, spread out their magnificent long wings and flew from this cold country away to warmer lands and open lakes.

They mounted high, high up into the air, and the ugly little duckling felt so strange as he watched them. He turned round and round in the water like a wheel and craned his neck in their direction, letting out a cry so shrill and strange that it quite scared even himself. Ah! he could never forget those beautiful, fortunate birds; and directly they were lost to sight he dived right down to the bottom and, when he came up again, he was almost beside himself. He had no idea what the birds were called, nor where they were flying to, and yet they were dearer to him than any he had ever known; he didn't envy them in the least—how could he ever dream of such loveliness for himself? He would be quite satisfied, if only the ducks would just put up with him, poor gawky-looking creature!

What a cold winter it was! The duckling had to keep swimming about in the water to prevent it freezing right up. But every night the pool he was swimming in grew smaller and smaller; then the ice froze so hard that you could hear it creaking. The duckling had to keep his feet moving all the time to prevent the water from closing up. At last he grew faint with exhaustion and lay quite still and finally froze fast in the ice.

Early next morning he was seen by a peasant who went out and broke the ice with his wooden clog and carried the duckling home to his wife. And there they revived him.

The children wanted to play with him, but the duckling was afraid they meant mischief and fluttered in panic right up into

the milk-bowl, so that the milk slopped over into the room. The woman screamed out and clapped her hands in the air, and then he flew into the butter-tub, and from there down into the flour-bin, and out of it again. Dear, dear, he did look an object! The woman screamed at him and hit at him with the tongs, and the children tumbled over each other trying to catch him—how they laughed and shouted!... It was a good thing the door was open; the duckling darted out into the bushes and sank down, dazed, in the new-fallen snow.

But it would be far too dismal to describe all the want and misery the duckling had to go through during that hard winter... He was sheltering among the reeds on the marsh, when the sun began to get warm again and the larks to sing; beautiful spring had arrived.

Then all at once he tried his wings; the whirr of them was louder than before, and they carried him swiftly away. Almost before he realised it, he found himself in a big garden with apple-trees in blossom and sweet-smelling lilac that dangled from long green boughs right over the winding stream. Oh, it was so lovely here in all the freshness of spring! And straight ahead, out of the thicket, came three beautiful white swans, ruffling their feathers and floating so lightly on the water. The duckling recognised the splendid creatures and was overcome with a strange feeling of melancholy.

"I will fly across to them, those royal birds! They will peck me to death for daring, ugly as I am, to go near them. Never mind! Better to be killed by them than be nipped by the ducks, pecked by the hens, kicked by the girl who minds the poultry, and suffer hardship in winter." And he flew out on to the water and swam towards the beautiful swans. As they caught sight of him, they darted with ruffled feathers to meet him. "Yes, kill me, kill me!" cried the poor creature and bowed his head to the

## THE UGLY DUCKLING

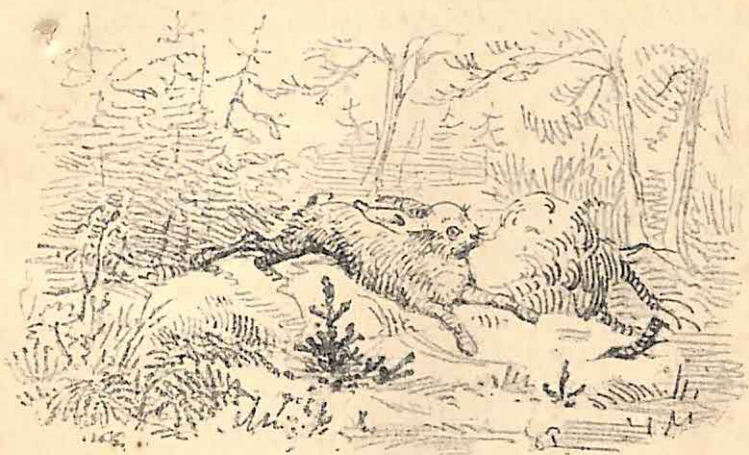
water awaiting death. But what did he see there in the clear stream? It was a reflection of himself that he saw in front of him, but no longer a clumsy greyish bird, ugly and unattractive—no, he was himself a swan!

It doesn't matter about being born in a duckyard, as long as you are hatched from a swan's egg.

He felt positively glad at having gone through so much hardship and want; it helped him to appreciate all the happiness and beauty that were there to welcome him ... And the three great swans swam round and round and stroked him with their beaks.

Some little children came into the garden and threw bread and grain into the water, and the smallest one called out: "There's a new swan!" and the other children joined in with shouts of delight: "Yes, there's a new swan!" And they clapped their hands and danced about and ran to fetch father and mother. Bits of bread and cake were thrown into the water, and everyone said: "The new one is the prettiest—so young and handsome!" And the old swans bowed before him.

This made him feel quite shy, and he tucked his head away under his wing—he himself hardly knew why. He was too, too happy, but not a bit proud, for a good heart is never proud. He thought of how he had been despised and persecuted, and now he heard everybody saying that he was the loveliest of all lovely birds. And the lilacs bowed their branches to him right down to the water, and the sunshine felt so warm and kindly. Then he ruffled his feathers, raised his slender neck and rejoiced from his heart: "I never dreamed of so much happiness, when I was the ugly duckling."



## *The Fir Tree*

Our in the wood was a fir tree, such a pretty little fir tree. It had a good place to grow in and all the air and sunshine it wanted, while all around it were numbers of bigger comrades, both firs and pines. But the little fir tree was in such a passionate hurry to grow. It paid no heed to the warmth of the sun or the sweetness of the air, and it took no notice of the village children who went chattering along when they were out after strawberries or raspberries; sometimes they came there with a whole jugful or had got strawberries threaded on a straw, and then they sat down by the little tree and said, "Oh, what a dear little tree!" That was not at all the kind of thing the tree wanted to hear.

The next year it had shot up a good deal, and the year after that its girth had grown even bigger; for, with a fir tree, you can always tell how old it is by the number of rings it has.

"Oh, if only I were a tall tree like the others!" sighed the little fir. "Then I'd be able to spread out my branches all round me and see out over the wide world with my top. The birds would come and nest in my branches and, whenever it was windy, I'd be able to nod just as grandly as the others."

It took no pleasure in the sunshine or the birds or the pink clouds that, morning and evening, went sailing overhead.

When winter came and the snow lay sparkling white all around, then a hare would often come bounding along and jump right over the little tree—oh, how annoying that was!... But two winters passed and by the third winter the tree had grown so tall that the hare had to run round it. Yes, grow, grow, become tall and old—that was much the finest thing in the world, thought the tree.

In the autumn the woodcutters always came and felled some of the tallest trees. That used to happen every year; and the young fir, which was now quite a sizable tree, trembled at the sight, for the splendid great trees would crack and crash to the ground; their branches were lopped off, and they looked all naked and spindly—they were hardly recognisable—and then they were loaded on to waggons and carted away by horses out of the wood.

Where were they off to? What was in store for them?

In the spring, when the swallow and the stork arrived, the tree asked them, "Do you know where they've gone—where they've been taken to? Have you seen anything of them?"

The swallows knew nothing, but the stork looked thoughtful and replied with a nod, "Yes, I believe I know. I came across a lot of new ships, as I flew here from Egypt; they had splendid masts—I dare say it was them—I could smell the fir, and they asked to be remembered to you. Oh, how straight they stand!"

"How I do wish that *I* were big enough to fly across the sea! And, as a matter of fact, what sort of a thing is this sea? What does it look like?"

"That would take far too long to explain", said the stork and went his way.

"Rejoice in your youth," said the sunbeams; "rejoice in your lusty growth, and in the young life that is in you." And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew wept tears over it, but this meant nothing to the fir tree.

As Christmas drew near, quite young trees were cut down, trees that often were nothing like so big or so old as our fir tree, which knew no peace and was always longing to get away. These young trees—and they were just the very handsomest ones—always kept their branches; they were laid on waggons and carted away by horses out of the wood.

"Where are they off to?" asked the fir tree. "They are no bigger than I am; there was even one that was much smaller. Why did they all keep their branches? Where are they going?"

"We know, we know!" twittered the sparrows. "We've been peeping in at the windows down in the town; we know where they're going. All the glory and splendour you can imagine awaits them. We looked in through the window-panes and saw how the trees were planted in the middle of a cosy room and decorated with the loveliest things: gilded apples, honey cakes, toys and hundreds of candles."

"And then?" asked the fir tree, quivering in every branch. "And then? What happens then?"

"Well, we didn't see any more. But it was magnificent."

"I wonder if it will be my fate to go that dazzling road," cried the tree in delight. "It's even better than crossing the ocean. How I'm longing for Christmas! I'm now just as tall and spreading as the others who were taken away last year. Oh, if only I

were already on the waggon—if only I were in the cosy room amidst all that glory and splendour! And then? yes, there must be something still better, still more beautiful in store for me—or why should they decorate me like that?—something much greater, and much more splendid. But what? Oh! the labouring and longing I go through! I don't know myself what's the matter with me."

"Rejoice in me," said the air and the sunlight; "rejoice in your lusty youth out here in the open."

But the fir tree did nothing of the kind. It went on growing and growing; there it was, winter and summer, always green—dark green. People who saw it remarked, "That's a pretty tree"; and at Christmas time it was the first to be felled. The axe cut deep through pith and marrow, and the tree fell to the earth with a sigh, faint with pain, with no more thoughts of any happiness; it was so sad at parting from its home, from the place where it had grown up. For it knew that never again would it see those dear old friends, the little bushes and flowers that grew around—yes, and perhaps not even the birds. There was nothing pleasant about such a parting.

The tree didn't come to itself till it was being unloaded in the yard with the other trees and it heard a man say, "That one's a beauty—that's the one we'll have."

Now came two lackeys in full fig and carried the fir tree into a splendid great room. There were portraits all round on the walls, and by the big tile fireplace stood huge Chinese vases with lions on their lids. There were rocking-chairs, silk-covered sofas, large tables piled with picture-books and toys worth hundreds of pounds—at least, so said the children. And the fir tree was propped up in a great firkin barrel filled with sand, though no one could see it was a barrel because it was draped round with green baize and was standing on a gay-coloured

carpet. How the tree trembled! Whatever was going to happen? Servants and young ladies alike were soon busy decorating it. On the branches they hung the little nets that had been cut out of coloured paper, each net being filled with sweets; gilded apples and walnuts hung down as if they were growing there, and over a hundred red, blue and white candles were fastened to the branches. Dolls that looked just like living people—such as the tree had never seen before—hovered among the greenery, while right up at the very top they had put a great star of gold tinsel; it was magnificent—you never saw anything like it.

"Tonight", they all said, "tonight it's going to sparkle—you see!"

"Oh, if only tonight were here!" thought the tree. "If only the candles were already lighted! What happens then, I wonder? Do trees come from the wood to look at me? Will the sparrows fly to the window-panes? Shall I take root here and keep my decorations winter and summer?"

Well, well—a nice lot the fir tree knew! But it had got barkache from sheer longing, and barkache is just as bad for a tree as headache is for the rest of us.

At last the candles were lighted—what a blaze, what magnificence! It made the tree tremble in every branch, until one of the candles set fire to the greenery—didn't that smart!

"Oh dear!" cried the young ladies and quickly put out the fire.

After that, the tree didn't even dare to tremble—it was awful. It was so afraid of losing any of its finery, and it felt quite dazed by all that magnificence... Then suddenly both folding doors flew open, and a flock of children came tearing in, as if they were going to upset the whole tree. The older people followed soberly behind; the little ones stood quite silent—but only for a moment—then they made the air ring with their shouts of delight. They danced round the tree, and one present after another was pulled off it.

"Whatever are they doing?" thought the tree. "What's going to happen?" The candles burned right down to their branches and, as they did so, they were put out, and the children were allowed to plunder the tree. They rushed in at it, till it creaked in every branch; if it hadn't been fastened to the ceiling by the top and the gold star, it would have tumbled right over.

The children danced round with their splendid toys, and nobody looked at the tree except the old nurse, who went peering among the branches—though this was only to see if there wasn't some fig or apple that had been overlooked.

"A story—tell us a story!" cried the children, dragging a little fat man over towards the tree. He sat down right under it, "for then we are in the greenwood", he said, "and it will be so good for the tree to listen with you. But I'll only tell one story. Would you like the one about *Hickory-Dickory* or the one about *Humpty-Dumpty, who fell downstairs and yet came to the throne and married the Princess?*"

"*Hickory-Dickory*", cried some; "*Humpty-Dumpty*", cried others. There was such yelling and shouting; only the fir tree was quite silent and thought "Shan't I be in it as well? Isn't there anything for me to do?" But of course it *had* been in it—done just what it had to do.

The little fat man told them the story of *Humpty-Dumpty, who fell downstairs and yet came to the throne and married the Princess*. And the children clapped their hands and called out, "Tell us another story! One more!" They wanted to have *Hickory-Dickory* as well, but they only got the one about *Humpty-Dumpty*. The fir tree stood there in silent thought: never had the birds out in the wood told a story like that. "*Humpty-Dumpty fell downstairs and yet married the Princess—well, well, that's how they go on in the great world!*" thought the fir tree, and felt it must all be true, because the story-teller was such a nice man. "Well, who

knows? Maybe I too shall fall downstairs and marry a Princess." And it looked forward to being decked out again next day with candles and toys, tinsel and fruit.

"I shan't tremble tomorrow," it thought. "I mean to enjoy my magnificence to the full. Tomorrow I shall again hear the story about Humpty-Dumpty and perhaps the one about Hickory-Dickory as well". And the tree stood the whole night in silent thought.

The next morning in came manservant and maid.

"Now all the doings will begin again," thought the tree. Instead, they hauled it out of the room, up the stairs and into the attic, where they stowed it away in a dark corner out of the daylight. "What's the meaning of this?" wondered the tree. "What is there for me to do here? What am I to listen to?" And it leaned up against the wall and stood there thinking and thinking... It had plenty of time for that, because days and nights went by. No one came up there, and when at last somebody did come it was to put some big boxes away in the corner; the tree was completely hidden—you might have thought it was utterly forgotten.

"It's winter by now outside," thought the tree. "The ground will be hard and covered with snow, people wouldn't be able to plant me; so I expect I shall have to shelter here till the spring. How considerate! How kind people are!... If only it weren't so dark and so terribly lonely in here! Not even a little hare... It was so jolly out in the wood, when the snow was lying and the hare went bounding past; yes, even when it jumped right over me, though I didn't like it at the time. Up here it's too lonely for words."

"Pee-pee!" squeaked a little mouse just then, creeping out on the floor; and another one followed it. They sniffed at the fir tree and slipped in and out of its branches. "It's horribly cold,"

said the little mice, "though this is actually a splendid place to be in, don't you think, old fir tree?"

"I'm not a bit old," answered the fir tree. "There are lots of people who are much older than I am."

"Where do you hail from?" asked the mice, "and what do you know?" (They were being dreadfully inquisitive). "Do tell us about the loveliest place on earth. Have you ever been there? Have you been in the larder, where there are cheeses on the shelves and hams hanging from the ceiling—where you can dance on tallow candles and you go in thin and come out fat?"

"No, I don't know the larder," said the tree, "but I know the wood, where the sun shines and the birds sing"; and then it told all about the days when it was young. The little mice had never heard anything like it before, and they listened closely and said, "Why, what a lot you've seen! How happy you must have been!"

"I?" said the fir tree and pondered over what it had just been saying, "yes, they were really very pleasant times." But then it went on to tell them about Christmas Eve, when it had been tricked out with cakes and candles.

"Ooh!" said the little mice, "you *have* been a happy old fir tree."

"I'm not a bit old," repeated the tree; "I've only this winter come from the wood. I'm just in my prime; my growth is only being checked for a while."

"What lovely stories you tell!" said the little mice; and they came back the following night with four more little mice who wanted to hear the tree tell stories, and the more it told the better it remembered everything itself, thinking, "Those were really rather jolly times. But they may come again, they may come again. Humpty-Dumpty fell downstairs and yet won the Princess; perhaps I too may win a Princess." And then the fir tree suddenly remembered such a sweet little birch tree growing out

in the wood; that, for the fir tree, would be a real beautiful Princess.

"Who is Humpty-Dumpty?" asked the little mice. Then the fir tree told them the whole fairy tale; it could remember every word; and the little mice were ready to jump up to the top of the tree for sheer enjoyment. The night after, many more mice turned up and, on the Sunday, even two rats. But these declared that the tale was not at all amusing, which disappointed the little mice because now they didn't think so much of it either.

"Is that the only story you know?" asked the rats.

"Only that one", replied the tree. "I heard it on the happiest evening of my life, but I never realised then how happy I was."

"It's a fearfully dull story. Don't you know any about pork and tallow candles? One about the larder?"

"No," said the tree.

"Well, then, thank you for nothing," answered the rats and went home again.

In the end, the little mice kept away as well, and the tree said with a sigh, "It really was rather nice with them sitting round me, those eager little mice, listening to what I told them. Now that's over too... though I shall remember to enjoy myself, when I'm taken out once more."

But when would that happen? Well, it happened one morning when people came up and rummaged about the attic. The boxes were being moved, and the tree was dragged out. They certainly dumped it rather hard on to the floor, but one of the men at once pulled it along towards the stairs where there was daylight.

"Life's beginning again for me!" thought the tree. It could feel the fresh air, the first sunbeams—and now it was out in the courtyard. Everything happened so quickly that the tree quite forgot to look at itself, there was so much to see all around. The

yard gave on to a garden where everything was in bloom. The roses smelt so sweet and fresh as they hung over the little trellis, the lime trees were blossoming, and the swallows flew around saying, "Kvirra-virra-veet, my husband's arrived!" But it wasn't the fir tree they were thinking of.

"This is the life for me!" it cried out joyfully, spreading out its branches. Alas! they were all withered and yellow, and the tree lay in a corner among weeds and nettles. The gold-paper star was still in its place at the top and glittered away in the bright sunshine.

Playing in the courtyard itself were a few of the merry children who at Christmas time had danced round the tree and were so pleased with it. One of the smallest ran up and tore off the gold star.

"Look what I've found still there on that nasty old Christmas tree!" he said, trampling on the branches so that they crackled under his boots.

And the tree looked at the fresh beauty of the flowers in the garden, and then at itself, and it wished it had stayed in that dark corner up in the attic. It thought of the fresh days of its youth in the wood, of that merry Christmas Eve, and of the little mice who had listened with such delight to the story of Humpty-Dumpty.

"All over!" said the poor tree, "if only I had been happy while I could! All over!"

And the man came and chopped up the tree into small pieces, till there was quite a heap. It made a fine blaze under the big copper; and the tree groaned so loudly that every groan was like a little shot going off. This made the children who were playing run in and sit down before the fire; and as they looked into it they shouted "bang!"—but at every pop (which was a deep groan) the tree thought of a summer's day in the wood, or

## THE FIR TREE

of a winter's night out there when the stars were shining; it thought of Christmas Eve and of *Humpty-Dumpty*, the only fairy tale it had ever heard and was able to tell... And by this time the tree was burnt right up.

The boys were playing in the yard, and the smallest of them had on his chest the gold star which had crowned the tree on its happiest evening. That was all over now, and it was all over with the tree, and so it is with the story. That's what happens at last to every story—all over, all over!

## *The Little Match-Seller*

It was terribly cold. Snow was falling, and soon it would be quite dark; for it was the last day in the year—New Year's Eve. Along the street, in that same cold and dark, went a poor little girl in bare feet—well, yes, it's true, she had slippers on when she left home; but what was the good of that? They were great big slippers which her mother used to wear, so you can imagine the size of them; and they both came off when the little girl scurried across the road just as two carts went whizzing by at a fearful rate. One slipper was not to be found, and a boy ran off with the other, saying it would do for a cradle one day when he had children of his own.

So there was the little girl, walking along in her bare feet that were simply blue with cold. In an old apron she was carrying a whole lot of matches, and she had one bunch of them in her hand. She hadn't sold anything all day, and no one had given her a single penny. Poor mite, she looked so downcast, as she trudged along hungry and shivering. The snowflakes settled on her long flaxen hair, which hung in pretty curls over her shoulders; but you may be sure she wasn't thinking about her looks. Lights were shining in every window, and out into the street came the lovely smell of roast goose. You see, it was New Year's Eve; that's what she was thinking about.

Over in a little corner between two houses—one of them jutted out rather more into the street than the other—there she

## THE LITTLE MATCH-SELLER

crouched and huddled with her legs tucked under her; but she only got colder and colder. She didn't dare to go home, for she hadn't sold a match nor earned a single penny. Her father would beat her, and besides it was so cold at home. They had only the bare roof over their heads and the wind whistled through



that, although the worst cracks had been stopped up with rags and straw. Her hands were really quite numb with cold. Ah, but a little match—that would be a comfort. If only she dared pull one out of the bunch, just one, strike it on the wall and warm her fingers! She pulled one out... ritch... how it spirted and blazed! Such a clear warm flame, like a little candle, as she put her hand round it—yes, and what a curious light it was! The little girl fancied she was sitting in front of a big iron stove with shiny brass knobs and brass facings, with such a warm friendly fire burning ... why, whatever was that? She was just stretching out her toes, so as to warm them too, when—out went the flame, and the stove vanished. There she sat with a little stub of burnt-out match in her hand.

She struck another one. It burned up so brightly, and where the gleam fell on the wall this became transparent like gauze. She could see right into the room, where the table was laid with a glittering white cloth and with delicate china; and there, steaming deliciously, was the roast goose stuffed with prunes and apples. Then, what was even finer, the goose jumped off the dish and waddled along the floor with the carving-knife and fork in its back. Right up to the poor little girl it came... but then the match went out, and nothing could be seen but the massive cold wall.

She lighted another match. Now she was sitting under the loveliest Christmas tree; it was even bigger and prettier than the one she had seen through the glass-door at the rich merchant's at Christmas. Hundreds of candles were burning on the green branches, and gay-coloured prints, like the ones they hang in the shop-windows, looked down at her. The little girl reached up both her hands ... then the match went out; all the Christmas candles rose higher and higher, until now she could see they were the shining stars. One of them rushed down the sky with a long fiery streak.

"That's somebody dying," said the little girl; for her dead Grannie, who was the only one who had been kind to her, had told her that a falling star shows that a soul is going up to God.

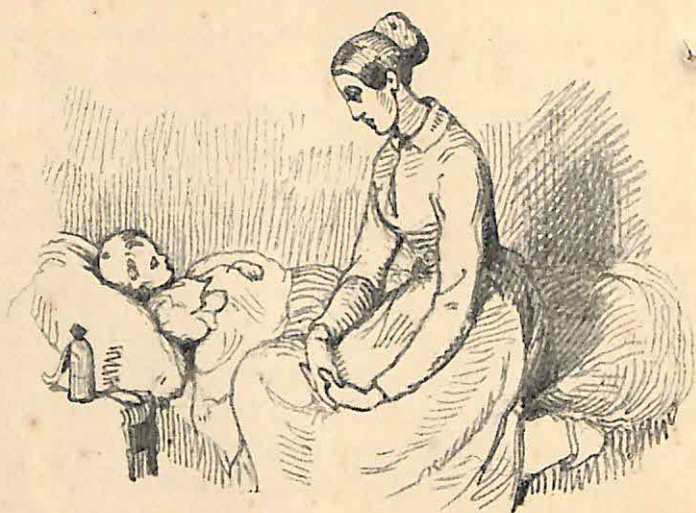
She struck yet another match on the wall. It gave a glow all around, and there in the midst of it stood her old grandmother, looking so very bright and gentle and loving. "Oh, Grannie," cried the little girl, "do take me with you! I know you'll disappear as soon as the match goes out—just as the warm stove did, and the lovely roast goose, and the wonderful great Christmas tree." And she quickly struck the rest of the matches in the bunch, for she did so want to keep her Grannie there. And the matches flared up so gloriously that it became brighter than

## THE LITTLE MATCH-SELLER

broad daylight. Never had Grannie looked so tall and beautiful. She took the little girl into her arms, and together they flew in joy and splendour, up, up, to where there was no cold, no hunger, no fear. They were with God.

But in the cold early morning, huddled between the two houses, sat the little girl with rosy cheeks and a smile on her lips, frozen to death on the last night of the old year. The New Year dawned on the little dead body leaning there with the matches, one lot of them nearly all used up. "She was trying to get warm," people said. Nobody knew what lovely things she had seen and in what glory she had gone with her old Grannie to the happiness of the New Year.





### *The Story of a Mother*

A MOTHER was sitting by the bed of her little child, and she was in great grief because she was afraid it was going to die. The child was terribly pale, the little eyes had closed, and its breathing was very soft and low—though now and then it gave a deep breath like a sigh, and the mother looked still more sadly at the poor little soul.

Then there was a knock at the door, and a poor old man came in wrapped in a kind of large horse-cloth. You see, that keeps you warm, and he needed it badly, because it was the middle of winter and everything out-of-doors was covered with ice and snow, and there was a biting wind.

And as the old man was trembling with cold and the little child had gone off to sleep for a moment, the mother went and put a small mug of beer on the stove to warm it up for him. The

old man sat there gently rocking, and the mother sat down on a chair close beside him. Her sick child was breathing heavily as she looked at it, and she took its hand.

"You don't think I shall lose him, do you?" she said. "Surely God won't take him away from me."

And the old man—it was Death himself—he nodded so strangely that it could just as well have meant yes as no. And the mother looked down in her lap and the tears ran down her cheeks... Her head became so heavy—for three days and nights she hadn't closed her eyes—that now she fell asleep, though only for an instant; then she started up trembling with cold. "What's happened?" she said, looking in every direction. But the old man was gone, and her little child was gone, he had taken it with him; and over in the corner the old clock whirred and whirred, the great leaden bob fell, bump! on to the floor, and the clock stopped. But the poor mother rushed out of the house calling for her child.

There, out in the snow, sat a woman in long black clothes, who said, "Death has been in your room; I saw him hurry away with your little child. He goes faster than the wind, and he never brings back what he has taken away."

"Only tell me which way he went," said the mother. "Tell me the way, and I shall find him."

"I know the way," said the woman in black; "but, first, before I tell you, you must sing me all the songs you have sung to your child. I know them well, and I love them. I am Night, and I saw your tears as you sang them."

"I will sing them all, all," said the mother; "but don't stop me from catching him up—from finding my child."

But Night sat still and said nothing. Then the mother wrung her hands and sang and cried; and there were many songs, but even more tears. After that, Night said to her, "Go to the right,

into that dark forest of firs; that is the path I saw Death take with your little child." Deep inside the forest she came to where the paths crossed, and she did not know which one to take. A bramble bush was growing there, which had neither leaf nor blossom, for it was mid-winter and the twigs were all frosted over. "Did you see Death go past with my little child?" "Yes, I did," replied the bramble, "but I won't tell you which way he went unless you will first warm me at your breast. I'm freezing to death; I shall soon be nothing but ice."

And the mother pressed the bramble so tightly to her bosom, to make it really warm, that the thorns pierced her flesh and she shed great drops of blood. But the bramble shot out fresh green leaves and blossoms in the cold winter's night—such was the warmth from a sorrowing mother's heart. Then the bramble bush told her the right way to go.

Next she came to a big lake, where there was neither ship nor boat to carry her across. The lake was not frozen enough to bear her, nor was it thawed or shallow enough for her to wade through; and yet cross it she must, if she would find her child. So she lay down to try and drink up the lake, and nobody on earth could do that, though the grief-stricken mother was hoping all the same for a miracle.

"No, that will never do," said the lake. "Let us two see if we can't come to an agreement. I collect pearls, and your eyes are the two clearest I have ever seen. If you will weep them out for me, I will carry you across to the great greenhouse where Death lives and looks after flowers and trees; each of them is a human life."

"Oh, I will give anything to come to my child," said the mother, already worn out with weeping. And she wept still more, and her eyes sank to the bottom of the lake and became two precious pearls. But the lake lifted her up as if she was in a swing, and she felt herself whirled across to the further shore where

there was an extraordinary house with a frontage that ran for miles and miles. You couldn't tell whether it was a mountain with woods and caves, or whether it was a regular building—though the poor mother couldn't see it because, you remember, she had wept her eyes out.

"Where shall I find Death, who went off with my little child?" she asked.

"He hasn't come yet," said the old woman who looked after the graves and the huge greenhouse of Death. "But how did you find your way here, and who helped you?"

"God has helped me," she said. "He is merciful, and you will be merciful too. Where shall I find my little child?"

"Well, but I don't know it," said the woman, "and you of course can't see. Many flowers and trees have faded tonight; Death will soon be here to transplant them. You know, every human being has his tree of life or his flower, each one according to his nature; they look just like other plants, but they have hearts that beat. A child's heart can also beat. Bear that in mind; perhaps you will be able to recognise your own child's heart-beat. But what will you give me for telling you what to do next?"

"I have nothing left to give," answered the poor mother. "But I will go to the ends of the earth for you."

"That's no good to me," said the woman. "But you can give me your long black hair. You know yourself how lovely it is, and I like it very much. You shall have my white hair instead; it's better than nothing."

"If that's all you ask for," she said, "then I'll gladly let you have it." And she gave her beautiful black hair and received the old woman's snow-white hair in exchange.

And then they went into Death's huge greenhouse, where flowers and trees grew strangely together. There stood delicate hyacinths under bell-glass, and big lusty peonies. There grew

water-plants, some quite fresh, others rather sickly, with water-snakes sprawling over them and black crayfish nipping their stalks. There stood lovely palm-trees, oaks and sycamores; and there, too, was parsley and flowering thyme. Every tree and flower had a name of its own; each was a human life that was still being lived, in China, in Greenland, all over the world. There were big trees in small pots, which cramped them terribly and made them ready to burst their pots; and often, too, there was a common little flower growing in rich soil, nursed and cared for, with moss round it. But the sorrowing mother bent down over all the tiniest plants and listened to the human heart-beats inside them till, among millions of them, she recognised that of her own child.

"There it is!" she cried and stretched out her hands over a little blue crocus that stood there weakly and drooping.

"Don't touch it!" said the old woman. "But stand here, and when Death comes—I am expecting him any moment now—don't let him pull up the plant; no, you just threaten to do that to the other flowers, and this will frighten him, for he must answer to God for them. None may be pulled up without God's permission."

Suddenly there was a rush of ice-cold air through the place, and the blind mother could tell that Death had come.

"How were you able to find your way?" asked Death. "How could you get here more quickly than I did?"

"I am a mother," she said.

And Death stretched out his long fingers towards the delicate little flower. But she kept her hands tightly round it—tightly and yet anxiously for fear she might touch one of its petals. Then Death breathed on her hands, and she felt that this was colder than the ice-cold wind, and her hands dropped limply away.

"You see, you can do nothing against me," said Death. "But God can," she answered. "I only do what God wills," said Death.

"I am his gardener. I take all his flowers and trees and plant them out in the great garden of Paradise in the unknown land—though how they will grow there and what it is like there, I may not tell you."

"Give me back my child!" pleaded the mother in tears. Suddenly she clutched two beautiful flowers near by, one in each hand, and cried out to Death: "I'll pull up all your flowers, for I'm desperate."

"Don't you touch them!" said Death. "You say you are so unhappy, and now you are ready to make another mother equally unhappy."

"Another mother!" cried the poor woman and immediately let go of both flowers.

"There, you can have your eyes back," said Death. "I fished them up out of the lake; they were shining so brightly. I didn't know they were yours. Take them back, they are now clearer than ever. Then look down into the deep well over there, and I will tell you the names of the two flowers you wanted to pull up. You will see their whole future, their whole human existence, you will see what you were just going to disturb and destroy."

She looked down into the well; and it was a joy to see how one flower became a blessing to the world—to see how much pleasure and happiness was spread around. And she saw the life of the other, full of sorrow and want and fear and wretchedness.

"Both are the will of God," said Death.

"Which of them is the flower of misery and which the flower of happiness?" she asked.

"I may not tell you that," replied Death, "but this you shall hear: one of those two flowers belonged to your own child—it was your own child's destiny you saw, your own child's future."

Then the mother shrieked in terror: "Which of them was my child? Tell me that. Save the little innocent, save my child

## THE STORY OF A MOTHER

from all that wretchedness! Rather take him away, take him into God's kingdom! Forget about my tears—my pleading—all that I have said and done!”

“I don't understand you,” said Death. “Do you want your child back, or shall I carry him you know not where?”

The mother wrung her hands, fell on her knees and prayed to God: “Don't listen to me when I pray contrary to thy will—thou knowest best. Don't listen to me!” And she buried her head in her lap.

And Death went away with her child into the unknown land.



# HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S WORLD FAME QUANTITY AND QUALITY

*By*

ERIK DAL

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN is world-famous. That is what foreigners tell us and that is what we tell foreigners, and that is what we all like to believe. So we go through the best Andersen collections in Denmark, supplement them with an examination of catalogues from the greatest libraries in the world, and then we find that his works—from complete editions to an odd fairy tale—are available in about 60 different languages, practically all the European ones, which thanks to the old colonial powers cover large parts of the rest of the world, the most important Asiatic languages and—something which should not be overlooked—the African Kololo language as well as Esperanto and other artificial languages.

The renown of the Danish author, in time, extent and intensity spread like ripples on the water after a stone has been thrown in. He was first translated in Germany, Sweden, and Holland (before 1840), then in Russia, England and USA (c. 1845), a little later in France, then in Poland, Czechoslovakia (in the 1850's), Spain, Italy (1860's) and then gradually also in the more distant Balkan countries. The knowledge of Andersen in Asia appears more scattered and random, although a lively interest in him in modern Japan must be mentioned.

If we wish to give a short account of Andersen's fate in the countries situated closest to Denmark, those which have trans-

lated him more than any others, we must say that a number of translators set to work on his novels, and then gradually on his fairy tales. Some of the translations were bad, others good, and both groups were the basis for new impressions and translations into other languages. The most famous illustrations, headed by those of the Dane Vilhelm Pedersen (1849), accompanied the texts on their journeys from one country to another.

At the end of the century the stylistic uncertainty in the production of books is reflected in the motley get-up of the translations. At the same time free adaptations of Andersen began to make their appearance because people had forgotten that Andersen had written anything but fairy tales. All the nurseries of the world were open to him, but he was losing status as a literary figure and was therefore treated with diminishing respect. In any circumstances it is difficult to render the subtle shades of Andersen's untraditional style with its strong colouring of the spoken language, but now descriptive sections without any action were unblushingly amputated, maxims and climaxes were either left out altogether or ruined by padding, and on occasion people altered not merely details which are difficult to understand for others than Danes, but any details at all, and finally even important parts of the plot. Where this was respected the whole might be boiled down to less than 10% of the original text, and as likely as not served up in verse.

In the present century this devaluation of the poet has continued, while at the same time responsible translators have reappeared. Yet it is only rarely that works other than the fairy tales are translated, such as his novels and books of travel, his autobiography and his letters. Few international scholars have done independent research on Andersen, and the results of Danish scholarship have not been made available in translation. People have to be content with sentimental biographical novels

based on the most "romantic" features of the poet's career, singular as it undeniably was.

We do not grudge the children their share in Andersen, and his fairy tales are and will remain his best works. But their strange fate as half-anonymous folk-tales deserves to be counterbalanced by good translations both of the fairy tales and of other works, and by a deeper understanding of the background against which they were written. Quantitatively Andersen's world fame is indisputable. But qualitatively we would like to see him come into his own as one of the great figures of world literature, not merely as the successful writer of children's books or, as it has been put, the world champion of the fairy tale.

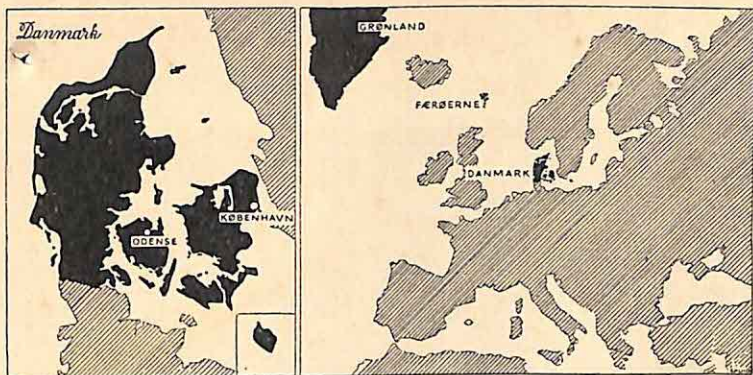
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— and his country. *Denmark today*

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN's native land—Denmark—has today a population of 4.3 millions. Together with Norway and Sweden the country forms the geographical area known as Scandinavia which by dint of purposeful cooperation on the part of the three countries is to an ever increasing extent becoming a cultural and economic unity.

Denmark consists of the peninsula of Jutland and about 500 islands of which some 100 are populated. The large island of Greenland in the north polar region and the Faroes, north of Scotland, are part of the thousand-year-old Kingdom of Denmark. Since 1947 King Frederik the Ninth has been the ruling monarch. The heir to the throne is the King's eldest daughter, Princess Margrethe. The King resides in the capital, Copenhagen, which has just over a million inhabitants.

There are no mountains in the country, but only in a few places is it completely flat. It is not very large. If we leave out Greenland its area is only 17,000 square miles, while Greenland has an area of 840,000 square miles. In Denmark mild summers alternate with winters which are only rarely harsh. Almost every square foot of land is cultivated or utilized in some other way.

Agriculture is still the chief source of exports, and its specialities—butter, bacon, cheese and eggs, etc.—are sold all over the world. There is, however, a growing industry, and this now feeds more than a third of the population. Typical exports are tinned goods, beer and spirits, medical products, cement, machinery and diesel motors, ships, refrigeration plant and textiles. Shipping and fishing are the third largest form of employment. Denmark is strongly in favour of free trade, and its tariff rates are among the lowest in the world.

In modern times Denmark has attracted attention from all parts of the world, largely on account of its agricultural structure which is characterized by numerous small farms and a high degree of cooperation between farmers through the cooperative movement and the folk high schools. These, together with the system of social welfare, have been studied by many foreigners.

